CENTER FOR ARCTIC CULTURAL RESEARCH

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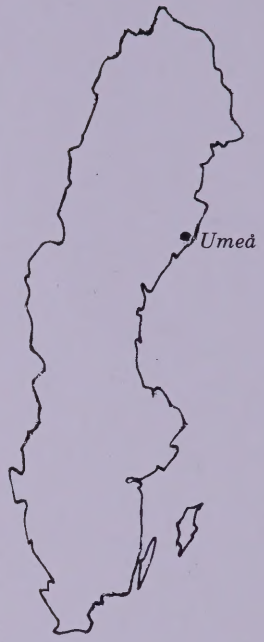

Cover. Seal hunters in Bay of Bothnia off Västerbotten coast 1969. Photo: Peter Gustafsson.

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The City and University of Umeå

The City of Umeå lies on the Ume River near the coast of the Bay of Bothnia at latitude 64°N, some 800 kilometers north of Stockholm. The climate is moderated, however, by the maritime influences of the Bay of Bothnia and the Gulf Stream. Vegetation is predominantly coniferous taiga with pine, spruce and birch woods.

Geologically, the formerly glaciated region has an active land upheaval rate of almost one meter per century, the maximum in Fennoscandia. The resulting shoreline displacement has been a great aid to archaeological chronology; man has been in this region for 8,000 years, as long as it has been ice free, and the cultural history is a mosaic of Samish (Lappish), Swedish, Norwegian, Baltic and Finnish influences.

Umeå itself — the name means the settlement by the River Ume — was given city privileges by the Crown in 1622 under King Gustaphus Adolphus. It was repeatedly burned and plundered by the Russians in 1714—1721 and occupied by them during the 1809 war — the last war on Swedish soil. In 1888 disaster struck again and most of the city was destroyed by yet another fire. Faring better since then, Umeå today is the administrative, military, industrial, medical and educational heart of northern Sweden. With a population of 75,000, Umeå is one of the world's northernmost metropolises.

Umeå is also the northernmost of Sweden's six university campuses. It was founded in 1956, first as a dental college, followed by a medical faculty, and then in 1965 by the faculties of arts, social sciences, mathematics and natural sciences, and a library of some 400,000 volumes. Umeå University's student body is about 8,000 of which 500 are foreign students.

The Center for Arctic Cultural Research

Although the University has 110 professorial chairs and 90 departments which provide students with a broad general education, research has naturally centered to a large degree on northern regions. This has taken the form of individual and departmental projects such as "Land-use North" and "Forest

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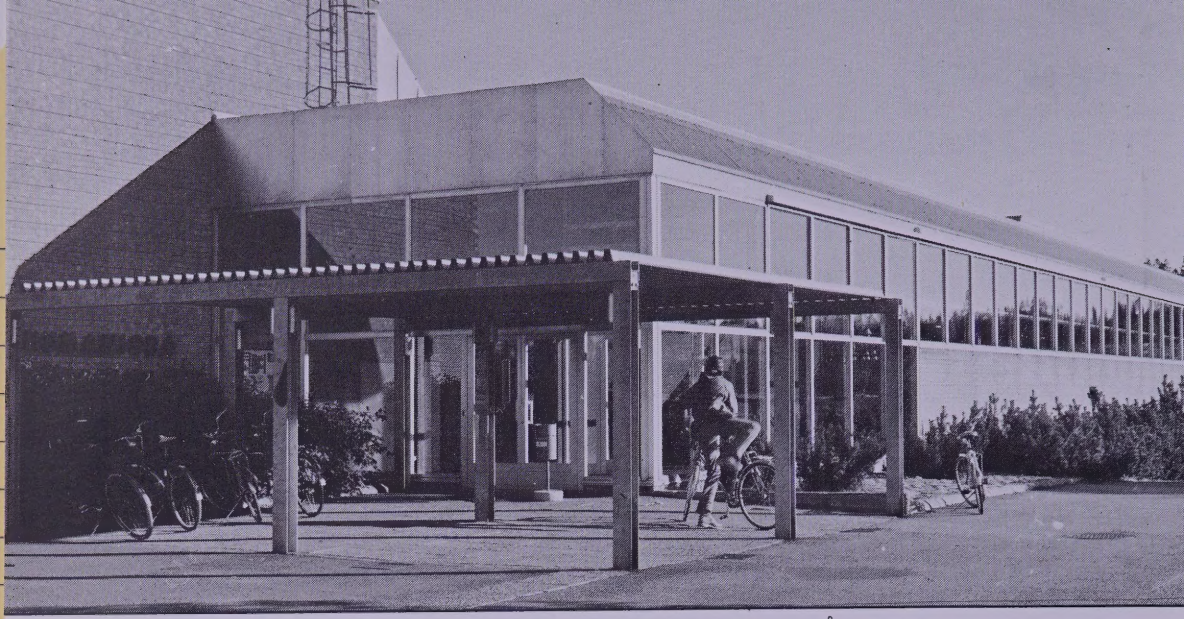


View of Humanities building. Photo Å. Sörlin.

Lapps and their Land-use and Economic Problems", both in the Department of Geography, or large interdisciplinary projects such as the "River Luleälv Project." The latter involved seven departments in three faculties: the departments of archaeology, ecological botany, economic history, ethnology, geography, history and Nordic languages. The goal was to analyze environmental, demographic, economic, social and technological change and resource utilization over the last 2,000 years along this river valley, from the high mountain region in the west to the Bothnian coast. A similarly broad-based project through the Department of Ethnology in Umeå deals with maritime cultures on the Gulf of Bothnia.

The Center for Arctic Cultural Research developed as a natural consequence of this orientation and will serve as a permanent part of the Faculty of Arts for integrating cultural research in the North and stimulating international contacts along these lines of inquiry. Although the Center focuses on cultural research, coordination with ecological and natural sciences is nevertheless stressed.

As early as 1979, the Faculty of Arts at Umeå proposed the establishment of a center in their long term plan for 1980—85. This was judged very positively by the National Board of Universities and Colleges and was consequently budgeted by the government from July 1st, 1983.

The title "arctic cultural research" signifies here huma-

nistic research within the whole circumpolar zone including arctic and boreal/subarctic regions. The ultimate goals of the Center can be summarized by four points:

a) to initiate and carry out research concerning circumpolar problems which relate to cultural development,

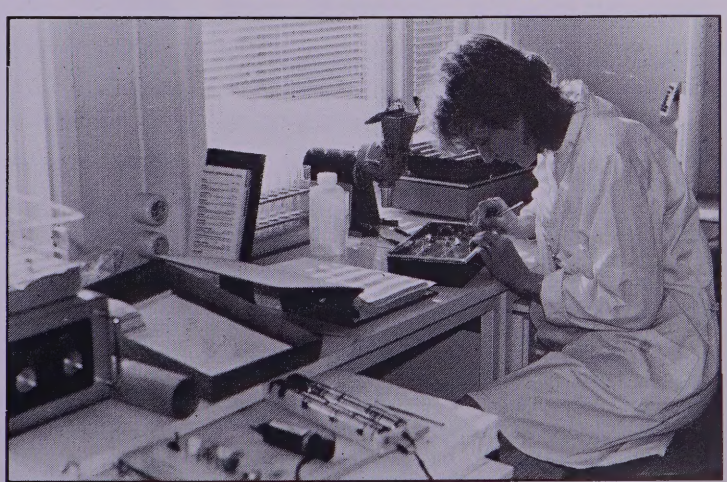
b) to collect material concerning circumpolar research on an international basis, to provide information about our own research, and to maintain contact with international research organizations in this field,

c) to organize seminars and provide education concerning circumpolar problems which relate to cultural development,

d) to promote flexibility in research and to encourage the interplay of different orientations and disciplines in studying circumpolar problems.

In practical terms, the Center will arrange symposia, provide for the exchange of guest scholars to and from Sweden, lend direct support to research projects and/or applications for additional research funds, publish an English language journal, aid in obtaining translations (from especially the Nordic languages and Russian) and maintain a bibliography of circumpolar literature.

Another important function of the Center in Scandinavia is to help coordinate research and related activites with the Samish community via the Nordic Sami Institute at Kautokeino, the National Union of Swedish Samis, Sameätnam and the Sami Research Council, as well as museums: the Fjäll and Sami Museum in Jokkmokk, the Silver Museum in Arjeplog, Skellefteå Museum and the Norrbotten and Västerbotten County Museums.



The Dept. of Archaeology in Umeå has a strong environmental orientation and maintains a soil-chemical, botanical and osteological laboratory.

Organization and Staff

The Center is a working unit of the Faculty of Arts which in turn bears the responsibility for its activities and maintenance. The governing board of the Center is appointed by the Faculty Board and the full staff, depending on funding, will consist of a director, a research and administrative assistant, an amanuens (part-time) and a part-time secretary. The governing board and the director from 1983 are as follows:

Director:
Docent N. D. Broadbent, Ph.D.

Board Members

Prof. Evert Baudou (chairman)
Dept. of Archaeology
Prof. Phebe Fjellström
(vice-chairman)
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Prof. Eva Ejerhed
Dept. of General Linguistics
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Dept. of Samish
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Doc. N. D. Broadbent
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Prof. Sigurd Fries
Dept. of Nordic Languages
Miss Inger Kuoljok, B. A.
Dept. of Ethnology
Dr. Lennart Lundmark
Dept. of History
Prof. Tryggve Sköld
Dept. of Finnish

Budget

The budget for the Center is based on funds granted by the Government through the National Board of Universities and Colleges. These funds are divided about equally between salaries and social costs for staff, and research, travel, guest scholars and seminars etc. The allocation of funds is kept as flexible as possible in order to maximize the availability of resources for projects within the 17 departments of the Faculty of Arts. The budget for 1984 is about 450,000 Sw. Crowns. To this can be added project research funding by Nordic Research Councils.

Samish (Lappish) culture is a vital part of northern Fennoscandian history. Scene from Frostviken, Jämtland. Photo G. Modin 1928. ULMA (Uppsala).

Research Projects

In its first year of existence, the Center is sponsoring and/or lending support to a number of project proposals including, "Seal Hunting Cultures on the Gulf of Bothnia in a Circumpolar Perspective" (Archaeology, Ethnology), "Linguistic Variation and Similarity on the Rivers Torneälv — Kalixälv in Norrbotten" (an analysis of Finnish, Swedish, Samish and the Upper Kalix dialect. Depts. of Finnish, Samish and Nordic Languages), "A Handbook of Historical Sources for Northern Fennoscandia (Univ. Library, Finnmark College, Alta, Norway), "The Agreement Between Sweden and Norway Regarding the Rights of Migratory Sami to Grazing Lands — the background, resources and consequences" (Nordic Sami Institute, Kautokeino, Norway and Dept. of Modern History, Univ. of Gothenburg).

Another proposed project in cooperation with the Department of Literature in Umeå is an anthology of literature from northern Fennoscandia which will reflect the life of the north Scandinavian farmers and fishermen, the inland settlers and the coastal and Lappland Samis. The anthology will be published in English.

Sacrificial site in northwesten Siberia (from Nordenskiöld 1880).

Publications

As a means of communication and exchange on an international basis, the Center will soon start publishing an English language journal. Besides serving as a forum for Umeå, contributions from abroad will be welcomed. The journal will be published by the university press. The first volume will present articles representative of research at Umeå University.

Courses and Seminars

The Center actively organizes seminars in Umeå which are open to the public. The following sample of lectures organized for the academic year 1983—84 illustrates the scope of this endeavor:

Johannes Marainen: "Samish National Citizenship in a Historical Perspective."

Inga Maria Mulk: "Samish Archaeology."

Louise Bäckman: "The Shaman's Drum in the Seance and its Pictorial Symbolism."

Åke Hultkrantz: "The Diffusion of Myth and Religion in the Arctic."

"A Comparative Ecological View of Arctic Culture and Religion."

"What Can the Arctic Rock Engravings Tell Us about Arctic Religion?"

William Fitzhugh: "Boulder Pits to Longhouses: the

evolution of settlement patterns and social complexity in the Labrador Maritime Archaic, 8,000—3,500 B. P."

"Inua: spirit world of the Bering Sea Eskimos."

"Ethnographic Paleoeskimos of Western Alaska: the development of Eskimo culture and art, 2,500 B. P. to the present."

"Climatic Change and Culture History in Relation to Indian-Eskimo Distribution in Labrador-Newfoundland."

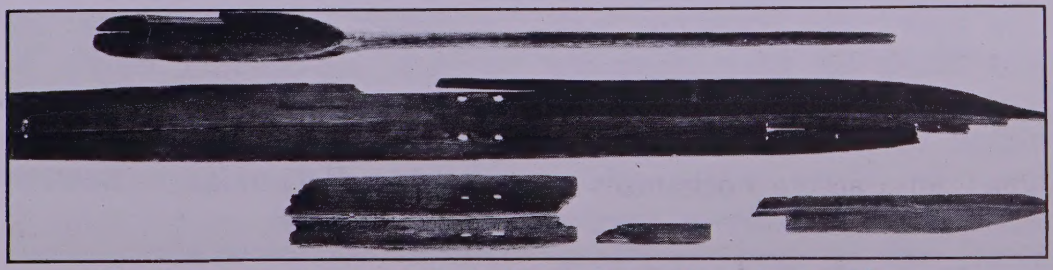
J. Marainen, Dept. of Modern History, Gothenburg, I. M. Mulk, Dept. of Archaeology, Umeå, and L. Bäckman, Dept. of Religion History, Stockholm, are Swedish Samis. Å. Hultkrantz is Professor of Religion History, Stockholm. W. Fitzhugh is Curator of Anthropology, Smithsonian Inst., USA.

The majority of the lectures are held in Swedish but, depending on guest students and researchers, can in the future be given in English. Most departments in the Faculty have also agreed to teach certain courses of study in English in order to accommodate guest students and scholars in Umeå.

Museum Collections

An agreement between the State Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm, the Västerbotten County Museum in Umeå, and the Center has made available a large and important collection of archaeological and ethnological material from Siberia, Greenland and Northern Asia. These include the collections of the Baron A. E. Nordenskiöld *Vega* expedition through the Northeast Passage in 1878—1880. This contains a large number of Samoyed, Chukchi and Eskimo objects, including excavated finds.

Also from the Eskimo is a collection of 3,051 objects (mostly archaeological) from 1904 — the so-called Pfaff collection. The F. R. Martin collection includes material from the Yakuts, Tungus, and a number of other northern peoples. This material (over 6,400 catalogued items) will be kept in the Västerbotten Museum in Umeå for study and display purposes. This resource



The Kalvträsk skis, 2.500 B. C. (C-14). Photo Västerbotten Museum.

and cooperation greatly enhances the Center's potential for comparative circumpolar studies and provides a means for disseminating information to the general public about circumpolar culture and ongoing work at the University and Center.

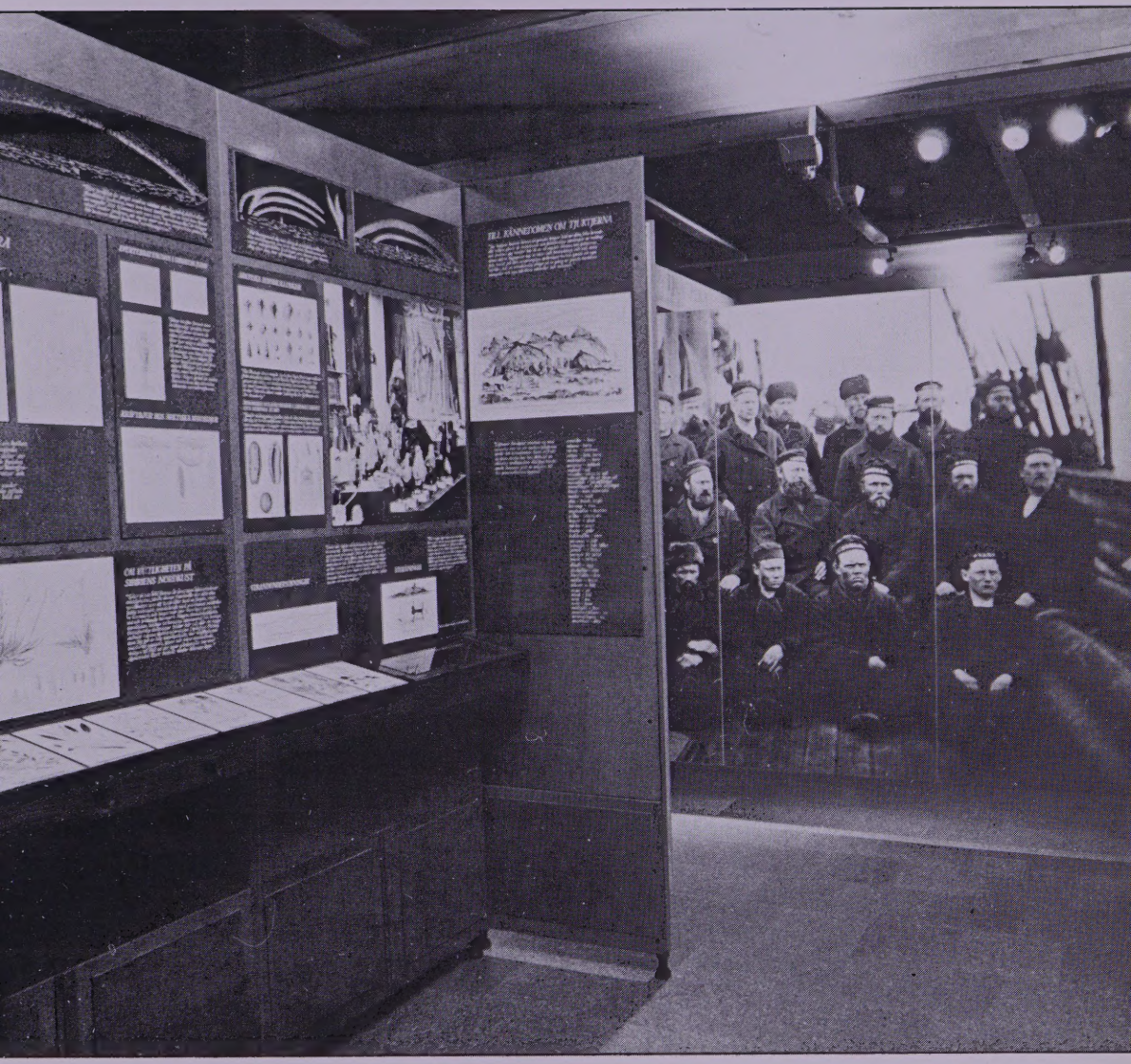
On April 8, 1984, Västerbotten Museum opens a permanent exhibit of *Vega* expedition material from the Chukchi in eastern Siberia. At the same time the Swedish Ski Museum will be opened to the public. This remarkable collection of hundreds of ski types ranges from prehistoric finds, including the world's oldest, from Kalvträsk, Västerbotten, ca 2,500 B. C., to Ingemar Stenmark's World Cup skis.

One of the goals of the Center outlined previously, the initiation of research concerning circumpolar cultural development, encompasses the study of the spread of culture and adaptation in the arctic and subarctic during prehistoric and historical times. Another of the major themes of research in Umeå (e. g. the Luleälv project) is resource utilization and seasonal exploitation over time. Together with this theme are basic questions regarding the significance of ecological factors in social formation. In these wide-reaching questions, our obvious springboard will be northern Fennoscandian conditions. The availability of the ethnographic and archaeological collections in Umeå and the Center's interdisciplinary structure nevertheless create an excellent environment for addressing questions of universal importance.

Swedish interest for arctic and circumpolar research has a long history. Not being a maritime and world power, however, the emphasis of even the early expeditions was more scientific than nationalistic.

The establishment of the Center for Arctic Cultural Research in Umeå is an effort to continue in this tradition and to strenghten international ties in regions which are being increasingly exploited in geopolitical, economic, environmental and, not least, human terms.

All inquiries about Center activities, guest positions and general information should be addressed to the Director, Center for Arctic Cultural Research, Umeå University, S-901 87 Umeå, Sweden.
Phone: 090/16 50 00



*The **Vega** exhibit (Ethnographic Museum) on display in Västerbotten Museum, Umeå. Photo copyright Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm.*

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Chukchi ice fishing. (Nordenskiöld 1880).